MMC Recruiting Candidates for Study on Preventing Strokes

The first patients are now being enrolled at MMC in a major national study comparing intensive medical management to carotid endarterectomy, a common operation to prevent stroke and to carotid artery stenting. The Carotid Revascularization and Medical Management for Asymptomatic Carotid Stenosis Study (CREST-2), is supported by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke of the National Institutes of Health.

Maine Medical Center is one of up to 120 medical centers that will participate in the study that is seeking 2,480 participants across the United States and Canada. Qualified participants are needed at MMC over the next five years, according to Robert Ecker, M.D., Director of Neurosciences and Endovascular Neurosurgery and the local principal investigator for the study. To qualify, participants must be at least 35 years old, have a significant narrowing of one carotid artery with at least 70 percent blockage, and have no history of stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA) within the last six months. Ideally, potential candidates live in southern or central Maine, so they may have easier access to the study site.

Buildup of atherosclerosis or plaque, commonly known as hardening of the arteries, occurs at the point where the carotid artery divides into the internal and external arteries. Patients with carotid artery disease may be at risk for stroke if clots or debris from the plaque are dislodged from

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Cardiac Surgery Team Leaves for Mission Trip to Kenya

Nine members of the MMC cardiac team departed for Tenwek Hospital in Kenya on Thursday, for a 12-day mission. Their goal is to provide open heart surgery for twelve Kenyans, mostly children. The group is pictured here before their ride to the airport.

Final Week for Benefits Open Enrollment
Deadline to enroll is Friday, November 20, 11:59 p.m.
Visit mainehealth.bswift.org to enroll now.
“Physicians want to identify the best way to prevent strokes in people who have a narrowing in their carotid artery,” states Dr. Ecker. CREST-2 is designed to compare three different methods of stroke prevention to find the safest and most effective treatment for patients with carotid artery narrowing. The stroke prevention methods include intensive medical management or intensive medical management combined with carotid endarterectomy (en-dar-ter-EK-ta-mee) or carotid stenting. Carotid endarterectomy is an operation in which surgeons clean out and repair a main artery supplying blood to the brain. Carotid stenting is a procedure where a metal device called a stent is placed in a narrowed part of the carotid artery to cover the plaque and hold the vessel open. During the procedure, a small umbrella-like instrument called an embolic protection device is placed above the stent to catch any particles that might break away.

There are several risk factors for stroke, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, tobacco use, excess body weight, and physical inactivity. These risk factors can be modified through intensive medical management and lifestyle modification. In CREST-2 this stroke prevention method includes using aspirin to prevent blood clot formation, drugs to reduce blood pressure and bad cholesterol (LDL cholesterol), and a personal risk-modification coach to review ways to quit tobacco, manage weight, and increase physical activity.

“The information from this study will help us learn more about the best treatment for stroke prevention,” said Dr. Ecker.

Those interested in participating in the study should contact Robert Ecker, M.D., 207-885-0011, or Debbie Cushing, R.N., 207-885-4438.

United Way Parking Spot Raffle Winner Announced

Finance’s Aimee Plowman is the winner of the MaineHealth United Way 2015 parking spot raffle and our “Very Important Parker.”

Aimee will be the sole occupant of a parking spot on the RS level of the Gilman Garage for the next year. Thank you, Aimee, and everyone who donated to our United Way campaign this year!

Pictured l - r: Elise Gerrior, MaineHealth United Way (MHUW) Cabinet Member; Katie Johnson, MHUW Co-Chair; Steve Kasabian, MHUW Chair; Aimee Plowman, Finance; Alex Szafran, MHUW Chair

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